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FROM THE RANKS.

BY CAPTAIN CHARLES KING.

CHAPTER XIV.

Tuesday and the day of the long projected german had come, and if ever a lot of garrison people were wishing themselves well out of a flurry it was the social circle at Sibley. Invitations had been sent to all the prominent people in town who had shown any interest in the garrison since the regiment's arrival; beautiful favors had been procured; an elaborate supper had been prepared, the ladies contributing their efforts to the salads and other solids, the officers wisely confining their donations to the wines. It was rumored that new and original figures were to be danced, and much had been said about this feature in town, and much speculation had been indulged in, but the Beaubien residence had been closed until the previous day. Nina was away with her mother and beyond reach of question, and Mr. Jerrold had not shown his face in town since her departure.

Nor was he accessible when visitors inquired at the fort. They had never known such mysterious army people in their lives. What on earth could induce them to be so close mouthed about a mere german? One might suppose they had something worth concealing, and presently it became noised abroad that there was genuine cause for perplexity, and possibly worse.

To begin with, every one at Sibley now knew something of the night adventure at the colonel's, and as no one could give the true statement of the case the stories in circulation were gorgeous embellishments of the actual facts. It would be useless, even if advisable, to attempt to reproduce these wild theories, but never was army garrison so tumultuously stirred by the whirlwind of rumor. It was no longer denied for an instant that the absence of the colonel and his household was the direct result of that night's discoveries, and when, to Mrs. Hoyt's inexpressible relief, there came a prettily worded note from Alice on Monday evening informing her that neither the colonel nor her mother felt well enough to return to Silbey for the german, and that she herself preferred not to leave her mother at a time when she needed her care, Mrs. Hoyt and her intimates, with whom she instantly conferred, decided that there could be no doubt whatever that the colonel knew of the affair, had forbidden their return and was only waiting for further evidence to decide what was to be done with his erring stepdaughter. Women talked with bated breath of the latest stories in circulation, of Chester's moody silence and preoccupation, of Jerrold's ostracism and of Frank Armitage's sudden return.

On Monday morning the captain had quietly appeared in uniform at the office, and it was known that he had relinquished the remainder of his leave of absence and resumed command of his company. There were men in the garrison who well knew that it was because of the mystery overhanging the colonel's household that Armitage had so suddenly returned. They asked no questions and sought no explanation. All men marked, however, that Jerrold was not at the office on Monday, and many curiously looked at the morning report in the adjutant's office. No, he was not in arrest. Neither was he on sick report. He was marked present for duty, and yet he was not at the customary assembly of all the commissioned officers at headquarters. More mystery, and most exasperating, too, it was known that Armitage and Jerrold had held a brief talk in the latter's quarters soon after Sunday's evening parade and that the former had been re-enforced for a time by Captain Chester, with whom he was afterward closeted. Officers who heard that he had suddenly returned and was at Chester's went speedily to the latter's quarters—at least two or three did—and were met by a servant at the door, who said that the gentlemen had just gone out the back way. And, sure enough, neither Chester nor Armitage came home until long after taps, and then the colonel's cook told several people that the two gentlemen had spent over an hour up stairs in the colonel's and Miss Alice's room and "was foolin around the house till near 10 o'clock."

Another thing that added to the flame of speculation and curiosity was this. Two of the ladies, returning from a moonlit stroll on the terrace just after tattoo, came through the narrow passageway on the west side of the colonel's quarters, and there, at the foot of the little flight of steps leading up to the parade, they came suddenly upon Captain Chester, who was evidently only moderately pleased to see them and nervously anxious to expedite their onward movement. With the perversity of both sexes, however, they stopped to chat and inquire what he was doing there, and in the midst of it all a faint light gleamed on the opposite wall, and the reflection of the curtains in Alice Renwick's window was distinctly visible. Then a sturdy masculine shadow appeared, and there was a rustling above, and then, with exasperating, mysterious and epigrammatic terseness, a deep voice propounded the utterly senseless question:

"How's that?"

To which, in great embarrassment, Chester replied:

"Hold on a minute. I'm talking with some interested spectators."

Whereat the shadow of the big man shot out of sight, and the ladies found that it was useless to remain—there would be no further developments so long as they did—and so they came away, with many a lingering backward look. "But the idea of asking such a fool question as 'How's that?' Why couldn't the man say what he meant?"

It was gathered, however, that Armitage and Chester had been making some experiments that bore in some measure on the mystery. And all this time Mr. Jerrold was in his quarters, only a stone's throw away. How interested he must have been!

But while the garrison was relieved at knowing that Alice Renwick would not be on hand for the german, and it was being fondly hoped she might never return to the post, there was still another grievous embarrassment. How about Mr. Jerrold?

He had been asked to lead when the german was first projected and had accepted. That was fully two weeks before, and now—no one knew just what ought to be done. It was known that Nina Beaubien had returned on the previous day from a brief visit to the upper lakes, and that she had a costume of ravishing beauty in which to carry desolation to the hearts of the garrison belles in leading that german with Mr. Jerrold. Old Mme. Beaubien had been reluctant, said her city friends, to return at all. She heartily disapproved of Mr. Jerrold and was bitterly set against Nina's growing infatuation for him. But Nina was headstrong and determined. Moreover, she was far more than a match for her mother's vigilance, and it was known at Sibley that two or three times the girl had been out at the fort with the Suttons and other friends when the old lady believed her in quarters totally different.

Cub Sutton had confided to Captain Wilton that Mme. Beaubien was in total ignorance of the fact that there was to be a party at the doctor's the night he had driven out with Nina and his sister; that Nina had "pulled the wool over her mother's eyes" and made her believe she was going to spend the evening with friends in town, naming a family with whom the Beaubiens were intimate. A long drive always made the old lady sleepy, and as she had accompanied Nina to the fort that afternoon she went early to bed, having secured her wild birdling, as she supposed, from possibility of further meetings with Jerrold. For nearly a week, said Cub, Mme. Beaubien had dogged Nina so that she could not get a moment with the man with whom she was evidently so smitten, and the girl was almost at her wits' end with seeing the depth of his flirtation with Alice Renwick and the knowledge that on the morrow her mother would spirit her off to the cool breezes and blue waves of the great lake. Cub said she so worked on Fanny's feelings that they put up the scheme together and made him bring them out. Gad, if old Maman only found it out, there'd be no more germans for Nina! She'd ship her off to the good Sisters at Creve-Cœur and slap her into a convent and leave all her money to the church.

And yet, said city society, old Maman idolized her beautiful daughter and could deny her no luxury or indulgence. She dressed her superbly, though with a somewhat barbaric taste, where Nina's own good sense and eastern teaching did not interfere. What she feared was that the girl would fall in love with some adventurer or—what was quite as bad—some army man who would carry her darling away to Arizona or other inaccessible spot. Her plan was that Nina should marry here—at home—some one of the staid young merchant princes rising into prominence in the western metropolis, and from the very outset Nina had shown a singular infatuation for the buttons and straps and music and heaven knows what all out at the fort. She gloried in seeing her daughter prominent in all scenes of social life. She rejoiced in her triumphs and took infinite pains with all preparations.

She would have set her foot against Nina's simply dancing the german at the fort with Jerrold as a partner, but she could not resist it that the papers should announce on Sunday morning that "the event of the season at Fort Sibley was the german given last Tuesday night by the ladies of the garrison and led by the lovely Miss Beaubien" with Lieutenant or Captain Anybody. There were a dozen bright, graceful, winning women among the dames and damsels at the fort, and Alice Renwick was a famous beauty by this time. It was more than Maman Beaubien could withstand that her Nina should "lead" all these, and so her consent was won. Back they came from Chequamegon, and the stately home on Summit avenue reopened to receive them. It was Monday noon when they returned, and by 3 o'clock Fanny Sutton had told Nina Beaubien what she knew of the wonderful rumors that were floating in from Sibley. She was more than half disposed to be in love with Jerrold herself. She expected a proper amount of womanly horror, incredulity and indignation, but she was totally unprepared for the outburst that followed. Nina was transformed into a tragedy queen on the instant, and poor, simple hearted, foolish Fanny Sutton was almost scared out of her small wits by the fire of denunciation and fury with which her story was greeted. She came home with white, frightened face and hunted up Cub and told him that she had been telling Nina some of the queer things the ladies had been saying about Mr. Jerrold, and Nina almost tore her to pieces, and could he go right out to the fort to see Mr. Jerrold? Nina wanted to send a note at once, and if he couldn't go she had made her promise that she would get somebody to go instantly and to come back and let her know before 4 o'clock.

Cub was always glad of an excuse to go out to the fort, but a coldness had sprung up between him and Jerrold. He had heard the ugly rumors in that mysterious way in which all such things are heard, and while his shallow pate could not quite conceive of such a monstrous scandal, and he did not believe half he heard, he sagely felt that in the presence of so much smoke there was surely some fire and avoided the man from whom he had been inseparable. Of course he had not spoken to him on the subject, and, singularly enough, this was the case with all the officers at the post except Armitage and the commander. It was understood that the matter was in Chester's hands, to do with as was deemed best. It was believed that his resignation had been tendered, and all these 48 hours since the story might be said to be fairly before the public Jerrold had been left much to himself and was presumably in the depths of dismay.

One or two men, urged by their wives, who thought it was really time something were done to let him understand he ought not to lead the german, had gone to see him and been refused admission. Asked from within what they wanted, the reply was somewhat difficult to frame and in both cases resolved itself into "Oh, about the german," to which Jerrold's voice was heard to say: "The german's all right. I'll lead if I'm well enough and am not bothered to death meantime. But I've got some private matters to attend to and am not seeing anybody today." And with this answer they were fain to be content. It had been settled, however, that the officers were to tell Captain Chester at 10 o'clock that in their opinion Mr. Jerrold ought not to be permitted to attend so long as this mysterious charge hung over him, and Mr. Rollins had been notified that he must be ready to lead.

Poor Rollins! He was in sore perplexity. He wanted nothing better than to dance with Nina Beaubien. He wondered if she would lead with him or would even come at all when she learned that Jerrold would be unable to attend. "Sickness" was to be the ostensible cause, and in the youth and innocence of his heart Rollins never supposed that Nina would hear of all the other assignable reasons. He meant to ride in and call upon her Monday evening; but, as ill luck would have it, old Sloat, who was officer of the day, stepped on a round pebble as he was going down the long flight to the railway station and sprained his ankle. Just at 5 o'clock Rollins got orders to relieve him and was returning from the guardhouse when who should come driving in but Cub Sutton, and Cub reined up and asked where he would be apt to find Mr. Jerrold.

"He isn't well and has been denying himself to all callers today," said Rollins shortly.

"Well, I've got to see him or at least get a note to him," said Cub. "It's from Miss Beaubien and requires an answer."

"You know the way to his quarters, I presume," said Rollins coldly. "You have been there frequently. I will have a man hold your horse, or you can tie him there at the rail, just as you please."

"Thanks. I'll go over, I believe." And go he did, and poor Rollins was unable to resist the temptation of watching whether the magic name of Nina would open the door. It did not, but he saw Cub hand in the little note through the shutters, and ere long there came another from within. This Cub stowed in his waistcoat pocket and drove off with, and Rollins walked jealously homeward. But that evening he went through a worse experience, and it was the last blow to his budding passion for sparkling eyed Nina.

It was nearly tattoo and a dark night when Chester suddenly came in.

"Rollins, you remember my telling you I was sure some of the men had been getting liquor in from the shore down below the station and 'running it' that way? I believe we can nab the smuggler this evening. There's a boat down there now. The corporal has just told me."

Smuggling liquor was one of Chester's horrors. He surrounded the post with a cordon of sentries who had no higher duty apparently than that of preventing the entrance of alcohol in any form. He had run a "red cross" crusade against the post trader's store in the matter of light wines and small beer, claiming that only adulterated stuff was sold to the men and forbidding the sale of anything stronger than "pop" over the trader's counter. Then, when it became apparent that liquor was being brought on the reservation, he made vigorous efforts to break up the practice. Colonel Maynard rather poohpoohed the whole business. It was his theory that a man who was determined to have a drink might better be allowed to take an honest one, coram publico, than a smuggled and deleterious article, but he succumbed to the rule that only "light wines and beer" should be sold at the store and was lenient to the poor devils who overloaded and deranged their stomachs in consequence. But Chester no sooner found himself in command than he launched into the crusade with redoubled energy and spent hours of the day and night trying to capture invaders of the reservation with a bottle in their pockets. The bridge was guarded, so was the crossing of the Cloudwater to the south, and so were the two roads entering from the north and west, and yet there was liquor coming in, and as though "to give Chester a benefit" some of the men in barracks had a royal old spree on Saturday night, and the captain was sorer headed than any of the participants in consequence. In some way he heard that a rowboat came up at night and landed supplies of contraband down by the riverside out of sight and hearing of the sentry at the railway station, and it was thither he hurriedly led Rollins this Monday evening.

They turned across the railway on reaching the bottom of the long stairs and scrambled down the rocky embankment on the other side, Rollins following in reluctant silence and holding his sword so that it would not rattle, but he had no faith in the theory of smugglers. He felt in some vague and unsatisfactory way a sense of discomfort and anxiety over his captain's late proceedings, and his stealthy descent seemed fraught with ill omen.

Once down in the flats, their footsteps made no noise in the yielding sand, and all was silence save for the clash of the waters along the shores. Far down the river were the reflections of one or two twinkling lights, and close under the bank in the slack water a few stars were peeping at their own images, but no boat was there, and the captain led still farther to a little copse of willow, and there in the shadows, sure enough, was a rowboat, with a little lantern dimly burning, half hidden in the stern.

Not only that, but as they halted at the edge of the willows the captain put forth a warning hand and cautioned silence. No need. Rollins' straining eyes were already fixed on two figures that were standing in the shadows not 10 feet away—one that of a tall, slender man, the other a young girl. It was a moment before Rollins could recognize either, but in that moment the girl had turned suddenly, had thrown her arms about the neck of the tall young man,

The girl had thrown her arms about the neck of the tall young man.

and with her head pillowed on his breast was gazing up in his face.

"Kiss me once more, Howard. Then I must go," they heard her whisper.

Rollins seized the captain's sleeve and strove, sick at heart, to pull him back, but Chester stoutly stood his ground. In the few seconds more that they remained they saw his arms more closely infold her. They saw her turn at the brink, and in an utter abandonment of rapturous, passionate love throw her arms again about his neck and stand on tiptoe to reach his face with her warm lips. They could not fail to hear the caressing tone of her every word or to mark his receptive but gloomy silence. They could not mistake the voice, the form, shadowy though it was. The girl was Nina Beaubien and the man beyond question Howard Jerrold.

They saw him hand her into the light skiff and hurriedly kiss her good night. Once again, as though she could not leave him, her arms were thrown about his neck, and she clung to him with all her strength. Then the little boat swung slowly out into the stream, the sculls were shipped, and with practiced hand Nina Beaubien pulled forth into the swirling waters of the river, and the faint light, like slowly setting star, floated downward with the sweeping tide and finally disappeared beyond the point.

Then Jerrold turned to leave, and Chester stepped forth and confronted him:

"Mr. Jerrold, did I not instruct you to confine yourself to your quarters until satisfactory explanation was made of the absences with which you are charged?"

Jerrold started at the abrupt and unlooked for greeting, but his answer was prompt:

"Not at all, sir. You gave me to understand that I was to remain here—not to leave the post—until you had decided on certain points, and though I do not admit the justice of your course, and though you have put me to grave inconvenience, I obeyed the order. I needed to go to town today on urgent business, but between you and Captain Armitage am in no condition to go. For all this, sir, there will come proper retribution when my colonel returns. And now, sir, you are spying upon me—spying, I say—and it only confirms what I said of you before."

"Silence, Mr. Jerrold! This is insubordination."

"I don't care a d—n what it is, sir! There is nothing contemptuous enough for me to say of you or your conduct to me"——

"Not another word, Mr. Jerorld! Go to your quarters in arrest. Mr. Rollins, you are witness to this language."

But Rollins was not. Turning from the spot in blankness of heart before a word was uttered between them, he followed the waning light with eyes full of yearning and trouble. He trudged his way down along the sandy shore until he came to the silent waters of the slough and could go no farther, and then he sat him down and covered his face with his hands. It was pretty hard to bear.

TO BE CONTINUED.

ARBITRATE OR FIGHT.

Cleveland to England About the Venezuela Dispute.

WAR IS EASILY POSSIBLE.

The President Reviews the Venezuela Controversy, Concludes That he is Right, and Says There is no Calamity Equal to Supine Submission to Injustice.

President Cleveland submitted a remarkable message to congress last Tuesday. It is in relation to the boundary dispute between Venezuela and Great Britian and sounds pretty nearly like a declaration of war unless Great Britain shall agree to submit the matter to arbitration. Here is the message in full:

To the Congress: In my annual message addressed to the congress on the 3d instant, I called attention to the pending boundary controversy between Great Britain and the republic of Venezuela and recited the substance of a representation made by this government to her Britannic majesty's government, suggesting reasons why such dispute should be submitted to arbitration for settlement and inquiring whether it would be so submitted.

The answer of the British government, which was then awaited, has since been received and, together with the dispatch to which it is a reply, is hereto appended.

Such reply is embodied in two communications addressed by the British prime minister to Sir Julian Pauncefote, the British ambassador at this capital. It will be seen that one of these communications is devoted exclusively to observations upon the Monroe Doctrine, and claims that in the present instance a new and strange extension and development of this doctrine is insisted on by the United States; that the reasons justifying an appeal to the doctrine enunciated by President Monroe are generally inapplicable "to the state of things in which we live at the present day," and especially inapplicable to a controversy involving the boundary line between Great Britain and Venezuela.

Without attempting extended argument in reply to this position, it may not be amiss to suggest that the doctrine upon which we stand is strong and sound because its enforcement is important to our peace and safety as a nation, and is essential to the integrity of our free institutions and the tranquil maintenance of our distinctive form of government. It was intended to apply to every stage of our national life and cannot become obsolete while our republic endures. If the balance of power is justly a cause for jealous anxiety among the governments of the old world and a subject for our absolute non-interference, none the less is an observance of the Monroe Doctrine of vital concern to our people and their government.

Assuming, therefore, that we may properly insist upon this doctrine without regard to "the state of things in which we live," or any change in the conditions here or elsewhere, it is not apparent why its application may not be involved in the present controversy.

If a European power, by an extension of its boundaries, takes possession of the territory of one of our neighboring republics against its will and in derogation of its rights, it is difficult to see why, to that extent, such European power does not thereby attempt to extend its system of government to that portion of this continent which is thus taken. This is the precise action which President Monroe declared to be "dangerous to our peace and safety," and it can make no difference whether the European system is extended by an advance of frontier or otherwise.

It is also suggested in the British reply that we should not seek to apply the Monroe Doctrine to the pending dispute because it does not embody any principle of international law which "is founded on the general consent of nations," and that "no statesman however eminent" and no nation however powerful, are compentent to insert into the code of international law a novel principle which was never recognized before, and which has not since been accepted by the government of any other country."

Practically, the principle for which we contend has peculiar, if not exclusive, relation to the United States. It may not have been admitted in so many words to the code of international law; but since in international law counsels every nation is entitled to the rights belonging to it, if the enforcement of the Monroe Doctrine is something we may justly claim, it has its place in the code of international law as certainly and as securely as if it were specifically mentioned, and when the United States is a suitor before the high tribunal that administers international law, the question to be determined is whether or not we present claims which the justice of that code of law cannot find to be right and valid.

The Monroe Doctrine finds its recognition in those principles of international law which are based upon the theory that every nation shall have its rights protected and its just claims enforced.

Of course this government is entirely confident that in the sanction of this doctrine we have clear rights and undoubted claims. Nor is this ignored in the British reply. The prime minister, while not admitting that the Monroe Doctrine is applicable to present conditions, states:

"In declaring that the United States would resist any such enterprise if it was contemplated, President Monroe adopted a policy which received the entire sympathy of the English government of that date." He further declared: "Though the language of President Monroe is directed to the attainment of objects which most Englishmen would agree to be salutory, it is impossible to admit that they have been inscribed by inadequate authority in the code of international law." Again he says: "They (her majesty's government) fully concur with the view which President Monroe apparently entertained that any disturbance of the existing territorial distribution in that hemisphere by any fresh acquisition on the part of any European state would be a highly inexpedient change."

In the belief that the doctrine for which we contend was clear and definite, that it was founded upon substantial consideration, and involved our safety and welfare, that it was fully applicable to our present conditions and to the state of the world's progress, and that it was directly related to the pending controversy, and without any convictions as to the final merits of the dispute; but anxious to learn in a satisfactory and conclusive manner whether Great Britain sought her possessions on this continent without right, or whether she merely sought, under a claim of boundary, to extend possession of territory fairly included with her lines of ownership, this government proposed to its government of Great Britain a resort to arbitation as the proper means of settling the question, to the end that a vexatious boundary dispute between the two contestants might be determined, and our exact standing and relation in respect to the controversy might be made clear.

It will be seen from the correspondence herewith submitted, that this proposition has been declined by the British government, upon grounds which, in the circumstances, seems to me to be far from satisfactory. It is deeply disappointing that such an appeal, actuated by the most friendly feelings towards both nations directly concerned, addressed to the sense of justice and to the magnanimity of one of the great powers of the world, and touching its relations to one comparatively weak and small, should have produced no better results.

The course to be pursued by this government in view of the present condition does not appear to admit of serious doubt. Having labored faithfully for many years to induce Great Britain to submit this dispute to impartial arbitration, and having been now finally apprised of her refusal to do so, nothing remains but to accept the situation, to recognize its plain requirements and deal with it accordingly. Great Britain's present proposition has never thus far been regarded as admissible by Venezuela, though any adjustment of the boundaries which that country may deem for her advantage and may enter into of her own free will, cannot, of course, be objected to by the United States.

Assuming, however, that the attitude of Venezuela will remain unchanged, the dispute has reached such a stage as to make it now incumbent upon the United States to take measures to determine with sufficient certainty for its justification, what is the true divisional line between the Republic of Venezuela and British Guiana. The inquiry to that end of course, ought to be conducted carefully and judicially, and due weight should be given to all available evidence, records and facts in support of the claims of both parties.

In order that such an examination should be prosecuted in a thorough and satisfactory manner, I suggest that the congress make an adequate appropriation for the expenses of a commission to be appointed by the executive, who shall make the necessary investigation and report upon the matter with the least possible delay. When such report is made and accepted, it will, in my opinion, be the duty of the United States to resist by every means in its power as a willful agression upon its rights and interests the appropriation by Great Britain of any lands, or the exercise of governmental jurisdiction over any territory, which, after investigation, we have determined of right belongs to Venezuela.

In making these recommendations, I an fully alive to the responsibility incurred, and keenly realize all the consequences that may follow.

I am nevertheless firm in my conviction that while it is a grievous thing to contemplate the two great English-speaking peoples of the world as being otherwise than friendly competitors in the onward march of civilization and strenuous and worthy rivals in all the arts of peace, there is no calamity which a great nation can invite which equals that which follows a supine submission to wrong and injustice and the consequent loss of national self-respect and honor, beneath which is shielded and defended a people's safety and greatness.

(Signed) GROVER CLEVELAND.

Executive Mansion, Dec. 17, 1895.

Melton Is Chairman.

The National Executive committee of the Republican party, has recognized Captain L. D. Melton, of Columbia, as chairman of the Republican organization in South Carolina.